المجلس الاسلامي
Islamic Council

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HRH Prince Naif Ibn Abdul Aziz
Minister of Interior
Riyadh

I wish to draw your attention to an incident which has caused much distress to many people in Muslim countries . The incident relates to Shaikh Omar Abdul Rahman, a highly respected alim, a member of the Islamic Council, a former professor at Al Azhar and also at Imam Muhammad Saud University in Riyadh.

Shaikh Omar, his wife, a three year old child and a baby in arms obtained visas for Saudi Arabia from Saudi Embassy in Turkey on their valid and legally obtained passports. On 4 November they left Istanbul for Jeddah by Saudia. On arrival at Jeddah airport they were not allowed to enter the kingdom and were detained at the airport for one night without any reason given. They were ill-treated so much so that Shaikh Omar was not even allowed to get milk for the baby. He was then asked to buy air tickets for Riyadh and told that if he and his family wished to perform umra they could return to Jeddah from Riyadh. Accordingly Shaikh Omar bought tickets for Riyadh.

Once again on arrival at Riyadh airport he and his family were not allowed in and were detained at the airport for two nights. He was then told to return to Cairo which he declined. Again no reason was given. Forced into the situation Shaikh Omar and his family left for Sanaa in Yemen.

It is worth mention that Shaikh Omar has not only visited the kingdom on several occasions but has also worked as a professor at Imam Muhammad Saud University in Riyadh. During all those visits he never violated a Saudi law or acted in any way against Saudi interests. In fact he came to Turkey from Saudi Arabia where he had gone on a visa issued by the Saudi Embassy London. He is known to love Saudi Arabia and the Saudi people.

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I wish to point out that the ill-treatment of Shaikh Omar and his family is quite contrary to the noble traditions of your great father, Abdul Aziz, who always protected and helped alims and people in distress. It is also not in keeping with Islamic ethics which you no doubt respect and believe in.

I would very much appreciate it if YRH would look into the matter and advise the Islamic Council as to why Shaikh Omar and his family were prevented from entering the kingdom inspite of having valid visas, and were ill-treated. This would enable us to answer the many queries we have received from people highly concerned about the incident.

With best regards,
Salem Azzam
Secretary General
Islamic Council